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THE WAR IN ITS RELATION TO DEMOCRACY AND
WORLD ORDER

BY EMILY GREENE BALCH,

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America enters the war on grounds of the highest idealism, as the champion of democracy and world order. I will say briefly something as to two points: first as to democracy, and secondly, as to world order. But through all I have to say there will run, as a unifying thread, the question which confronts us all (not only now, but before the war and after the war and always), a question to which no simple answer is possible, the question of the place of coercion.

I suppose we are all ready to grant, whatever our opinions, that coercion is a thing of which we desire to have as little as may be, that the quality and effect of any moral act are better, in proportion as they are free of the element of coercion; that economic action is more effective and in every way more desirable in proportion as it is free of all element of coercion; that political action, the action of the citizen, is higher in proportion as it is clear of the element of coercion.

COERCION IN DEMOCRACY

How far can democracy be forced upon others or given them? If a people are free or democratic in their purpose and desire, but externally coerced, the external coercion may be removed and freedom allowed to express itself, but democracy and liberty, which are all ideas, all states of mind, must spread by contagion or imitation or whatever you want to call this divine tendency of mind to kindle mind and purpose. They can neither be presented to nor imposed upon others. A war for democracy and liberty faces this limitation.

We must remember always, in dealing with others, the peculiarities of human nature, and we can best understand human nature by the rule, which is as scientific as it is good, of believing that others are likely to act as we should act in a given situation. How far will a threat of outside force lead a nation to change its political customs and institutions, and how far will it act as a riveting and

consolidating force upon those elements of self-will which are so powerful in us all?

Must we not conclude that a country serves democracy principally and chiefly by being democratic, that it cannot enforce democracy? The same is true of liberty—liberty which is a part of democracy, though not all of democracy, as freedom from coercion is a part of liberty, though not all of liberty.

Where, in war time, with all the strains and stresses of war time, should tolerance and freedom cease? A bill, let us say, is before Congress, approved by a committee of the Senate, disapproved by a committee of the House. At what point is it illegitimate for citizens to discuss this legislation? Is it desirable in the interests of our country that it should be impossible to get a hall in which to discuss a piece of pending legislation? Is it desirable that ministers of the gospel and lawyers and reputable citizens up and down the land should feel themselves not only exposed to moral and social coercion, but to actual violence, if they discuss a piece of pending legislation in which they are interested and which they believe to be contrary to the welfare of the country?

Let us hold ourselves in control, let us be willing to have all points of view discussed in proper ways at proper times, with that freedom which is the pride and safeguard of our country, the salt in the dish of our national life.

We have read much during the last three years of the dangers of secret diplomacy. Now, vigilance is indeed the price of liberty, and it is very necessary that the public opinion of this country should intelligently and consistently acquire a knowledge of the details of the government's policy. I do not mean, obviously, the details which it is necessary, for executive purposes, to keep secret. No sane person would desire to have such details made public. But this country is entitled to be informed (and must continuously demand that it be informed) of every commitment, direct or indirect, by treaty or inference or gentlemen's agreement, of anything binding us, anything that we cannot throw off afterwards, because the course of events has been allowed to commit us to it without our having so intended.

Without arguing as to whether conscription is either wrong or unwise, I want to ask you to think it through.

Take the case which is least favorable to the opponent of

conscription. Consider the case of a young man who is not a conscientious objector in the sense of having religious scruples, a young man, let us suppose, who in the first place does not believe that this war is desirable for the country. There are intelligent persons and right-minded persons who held that view before the war and who, perhaps, have not changed it since. You require this young man not only to expose himself to the most intensive and prolonged suffering of which a human being is capable, endurance carried absolutely to the furthest limit (for endurance is, after all, a small part of what you ask of him), you ask of him to use his will-power, his intelligence, his personality unreservedly to further ends in which he disbelieves.

Now, suppose, further, that this man not only believes that the war is useless, but that he feels, as many religious young men do feel, that it is the last horror to go out and deliberately inflict injury on one's fellowmen. I think that when we make up our minds on this, we ought to try to see the vision from the inside as it presents itself to the individual, perhaps a boy too young to make his will, too young to marry without his family's consent, too young to vote, for whom this momentous decision is made by others.

Too often we conceive of an end of all war, of a world order, in a merely negative sense. We conceive of it primarily, too often, as a coercive league to prevent any of the partners breaking out into the use of violence for the achievement of an individual national end. Surely this is a most deformed and inadequate conception of the goal. Surely what we want is a free society of nations, with active, deliberate and interested coöperation for the great common ends. I do not desire so greatly a world in which we shall all, somehow or other, checkmate one another's desires to make war as I desire a world in which we stand shoulder to shoulder, all peoples working for those great ends which interest all people alike, and to which the native differences of different peoples are the greatest possible contribution, and which would lose by the stagnation of uniformity. We want the harmony of a symphony employing every conceivable type of instrument, not the dullness of similarity.

The constructive genius of the race must work out such a plan for proposing to all nations that you could not possibly force the Central Powers to keep out of it. I believe that it is a perfectly

practicable thing to offer them such a new world partnership that they will only be too eager and glad to come in.

There is an old fable which is always new, the story of the traveler and his cloak and the sun and the wind. The wind laughed and said, "See me take that man's cloak off," and he blew hard and whistled sharply, and the man wrapped his cloak about him as closely as he could. The sun smiled and said, "See me do it," and before he had done smiling the man had the cloak over his arm.

The nations desire nothing better than to throw away their armies and get rid of them. They are the most burdensome cloak that a people has ever had. But as long as we are in a world of imperialisms we shall all cling to them. It is only when we enter upon another plane that we shall find our armies a vast and unnecessary expense and a vast and hideous moral shame.

The time is to come somehow, sometime, when the ruling type of our civilization will be a coöperative world order in which the element of coercion will be shrinking more and more and in which the element of free, spontaneous, joyful fellowship will be ever greater and greater.

PEACE WITHOUT FORCE

By S. N. PATTEN,

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The program outlined by the President in his address before the Senate on January 22 seems to be a break in national traditions. In reality, however, there has been no break, but a fulfillment. What Washington said, what Monroe said, what Lincoln said, is said again by President Wilson more clearly and more in harmony with the actual trend of events. The thought of the fathers should be perpetuated but we should not be slaves to its formal expression. What they wanted we want, but new conditions force us to adopt an attitude in harmony with the closer relations in which the world now stands. Berlin and London are not so far from us now as Charleston and Boston were from Philadelphia a century ago. If we needed state unity then we need world unity now to attain the ends for which our constitution was formed. Carried along by